



ARMAGEDDON

STEPHEN PHILLIPS

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1915a



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ARMAGEDDON

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

PANAMA AND OTHER POEMS

WITH AN ETCHING BY JOSEPH PENNELL

LYRICS AND DRAMAS

INCLUDING "THE KING," A TRAGEDY.

NEW POEMS

INCLUDING "IOLE," A TRAGEDY IN ONE
ACT.

POEMS

INCLUDING "CHRIST IN HADES" AND
"MARPESSA."

PAOLO AND FRANCESCA

A TRAGEDY IN FOUR ACTS.

HEROD

A TRAGEDY IN THREE ACTS.

MARPESSA

ILLUSTRATED BY PHILLIP CONNARD.

THE NEW INFERNO

A DRAMATIC POEM.

ARMAGEDDON

A MODERN EPIC DRAMA IN A PROLOGUE
SERIES OF SCENES AND AN EPI-
LOGUE WRITTEN PARTLY IN
PROSE AND PARTLY
IN VERSE

BY
STEPHEN PHILLIPS

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no 1

"This war is not only a material, it is also a spiritual conflict."—*The Prime Minister at the Guildhall.*

"This war is a war of Christ against the Devil."—*The Poet Laureate in The Times.*

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

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CHARACTERS OF THE PLAY

IMMORTALS

SATAN, *The Arch-fiend*
BEELZEBUB, *Inferior only to Satan*
MOLOCH, *Lord of War*
BELIAL, *Lord of Lies*
RUMOUR
THE SHADE OF ATTLA
THE SPIRIT OF JOAN OF ARC

MORTALS

COUNT VON DER TRENK, *Commander of the Fifth German Army Corps in Rheims*
GENERAL MURDOCH, *Commander of the English Advance Corps in Cologne*
GENERAL LARRIER, *Commander of the French Army Corps in Cologne*
GENERAL LEBLANC, *Commander of the Belgian Advance Corps in Cologne*
THE ABBÉ OF RHEIMS
HERR WEISS, *Director of the Berlin Press Bureau*
CHARLES ROWLAND, *Vicar of Normanton*
PIERRE, *A French Peasant*
LADY CARTERET, *a Widow whose son is fighting at the Front*
ETHEL MILLARD, *Betrothed to the Son*
ELSA, *Daughter of the Burgomaster of Cologne*
CLOTHILDE, *a Belgian Girl*
MARIE, *a French Peasant Girl*

An English Officer—German Officers—Orderlies—
Reporters—etc. etc.

PROLOGUE



IN HELL

ARMAGEDDON

*The War is hatched. The Shade of Attila is
despatched from Hell to Earth.*

THE SCENE is a dark region of rock and sand with
shapes and shadows dimly discovered. In cen-
tre, up-stage, a shadowy throne, on which
SATAN is sitting, wearing a crown of ashes. As
the curtain rises shadowy arms are uplifted as
in appeal. BEELZEBUB rises to speak.

BEELZEBUB. How long, O Satan, in this outer
gloom

Shall we, who shook the firmament with war,

Impotent, ineffectually bide?

Indolent malice is intolerable,

Even as that ashen crown upon Thy brow!

Hark! How Thy legions murmur in the dusk!

They doubt Thy leading, question Thy resolve.

In action is the bread of mutiny!
And to recover from that old defeat
We have had time, it seems, and time enough.
Proclaim some fresh adventure, that may rouse
And rally our prone armies! Let them hear
The shattering clangour of the trump of Hell,
Pealing a resurrection from this grave!

SATAN. Spirit, to me alone inferior,
I am not to be moved by mutiny.
No menace I regard but my own mind.
Too long indeed we languish in the dusk;
And dark this desert only from our doubt,
Heavy this night only from our dismay;
These fruitless antres and these dunes of sand,
This country round us, we ourselves conceived.
You ask what fresh adventure I propose?
The Earth is but half won, a minor star,
But yet a star not quite contemptible.
Some countries Christian, here or there a king,
In spiritual skirmish have we captured,

But the main field and region of grand war
Disputed lies, an indecisive plain.
The Earth is but half won, though I myself,
To achieve our purpose there, did not disdain
To crawl upon the belly of a snake.
Where Craft hath failed us, now let Force prevail!
For Eden now let Europe make amends!
Hurl we a massive Fury on the world
With engines and artilleries of Hell,
With wail of women and cities thundered down,
Until beneath the bellowing, blind world-blow
Justice shall reel, Love, Pity, and mankind
Shall build to Force, not Faith, temples afresh.
Here is Thy sting, O Hell, Thy Victory here!
Surely our end approaches, though what end
It be we know not; this at least we know,
Our time is short, with Fury be it filled!

MOLOCH. O Master, with what glee these words I
hear,

I, Lord of War! Of late my mind misgives,

A most unwholesome, steamy mildness taints
The air; a sickly-stealing, vaporous calm,
Pernicious to the soul if long allowed.
Now, by Thy leave such havoc I intend
As never yet encumbered battle-plain.
Where thousands have but teased this primal thirst,
Millions shall now the brimming cup supply
In multitudinous, unimagined shock!
Rise, Madness! Mother that didst bring me forth
In pangs before the making of the world,
While Famine, like a midwife, eased thy throes.
Arise now, Massacre! Thou favourite daughter,
Got in adultery 'neath a moody moon;
Awaken to the smell of infant-blood!
What matter now the cause so ye be loosed?
Here have I space at last and boundless field!

BELIAL. O Lords, I scarcely know, if now I rise
In order, to address this full conclave,
I, Lord of Lies; nor would I seem to slight
The ancient, grand prerogative of Force.

Splendid is Force, but solitary falls
And self-defeated, unrelieved by lies,
And therefore I submit, I play my part,
For only here in Hell I speak the truth.
With deference I propose that I convey
To Earth my swollen, bilious Bureau,
To gloze defeat, or magnify success,
Doling to each land its particular lie.
Great Landlord, I complain not, but of late
I feel through crevices a draught of truth.
If any deem that I too lightly speak
In such assembly, and appear to jest,
Remember, in losing humour we lose all;
The thought provokes a spiritual sweat,
We should be then no better than—our betters.
Our kingdom is to laugh, as theirs to love,
We live by lightnings, they by steady light.
Again then I submit, I play my part.

SATAN. O son, whom of my sons I like the least,
Born me by Prophecy, a mistress merely,

Still I perceive thy necessary part.

Dole to each land the lie that it deserves,

But in the Teuton the grand lie instil.

Music I love not, but confess to like

The pleasant humming of a prosperous lie.

RUMOUR. I rise but to retail a wide report;

An island floats upon the western wave,

Whose people never yet have bowed to Force

And will not now; a stubborn brood and free,

They sway the varying oceans of the Earth,

And that which was but island and remote

Ne'er sees the setting sun go down on her.

She against Force may bring into the field

The turbaned East and her sea-sundered sons.

Her most in our attempt we have to fear.

I give this as report, though unconfirmed.

BELIAL. I am content that this report go forth,

But hold myself no way responsible.

SATAN. War is approved; not yet the means of
war.

Since upon mortal men we launch this wrath,
Then must we use a mortal instrument.
Whom better then, than one who died, yet lives,
Although in sanguinary slumber bound,
Can we employ? Arise then—Attila!
Shake from thine eyes the long, infernal sleep!
Or hast thou lost in dream the thirst of blood?
Awake! A wider carnage waits thee now!

THE SHADE OF ATTILA. For that long sleep the
drier are my lips.

SATAN. Attila, I despatch thee back to Earth,
And with more horrid opportunity.
The field to thee familiar—Chalons-Plain.
I stood behind thee in thy former rage,
And now behind thee stand in rage more vast.
Once hadst thou joy in arrow and in axe,
But now exult in engines that can belch
Armies away, and lay high cities flat;
Labouring art abolish, and erase
With one loud moment silent centuries!

Despatch thee then, and enter into him
To whom I send thee as a house prepared.
Through him thy fury work, through him destroy,
While he imagines all the havoc his.
Thou scourge of God, be now the lash of Hell!
Spirit athirst to Earth! And drink thy fill!

*[ATTILA, after making reverence, rushes
upward, earthward. There is a pause;
then from above is heard the wail of
women and children.]*

SATAN. *[Rising.]* A sea is in the caverns of my
mind.

Be every Hell unlocked, each Fury loosed,
Pillage and Rape unleashed upon the scent!
For by that splendour wherefrom I was thrown,
And by this thunderstroke on me unhealed,
Again I challenge Heaven, the stake a star!
War to the Earth then! Unimagined War!

CURTAIN

SCENE I

—

RHEIMS

SCENE I.—*A room in a French Chateau on the heights overlooking Rheims. General von der Trenk, commander of the fifth German Army Corps, is sitting at a table covered with papers, a revolver lying beside him. On the table are glasses and the floor is strewn with champagne bottles, some broken. At the back the spire of Rheims cathedral is seen, and from time to time a flame spurts up from the town below. German officers, etc., are sitting or standing around the General. An orderly fills the general's glass, and the glasses of the others. A lieutenant enters and salutes.*

TRENK. Well, then?

LIEUTENANT. I have to report, Sir, that our spies——

TRENK. Spies? We have no spies. The enemy spies, we reconnoitre.

[*Laughter.*]

LIEUTENANT. That our agents, dressed, some as labourers, others as old peasant women——

TRENK. Good so.

LIEUTENANT. Report that the enemy may retreat westward, if by so doing they may save the Cathedral.

They also report the possession by the enemy of a three inch shell, pattern unknown, which on explosion will instantly asphyxiate all living things within four hundred yards, so that in a room which has been hit, [*gesture*] you shall find a dead man, still standing at aim, or another a glass at his lips, lifeless.

[TRENK *puts down his glass.*]

The death, so caused, they say is painless.

TRENK. So; and that is something.

They say nothing of a French force operating on our right?

LIEUTENANT. Nothing, Sir.

[TRENK dismisses LIEUTENANT who retires
up-stage.]

TRENK. [*Picking up revolver at his side, to orderly.*] Unloaded, what?

ORDERLY. Sir, I——

TRENK. [*With gesture.*] Load! Set it here!

ORDERLY. Sir, shall I open the door? I hear a dog scratching on it.

TRENK. No, 'tis my servant. He must not knock, he merely scratches like a dog. Give him this paper, I never speak to servants.

[*He spits on paper before passing it to ORDERLY.*

That shell, eh? Is it treachery? Only a German brain could have invented that shell.

[*Enter CAPTAIN.*

CAPTAIN. Sir, I come for instructions. The Cathedral——

TRENK. Well, what of it?

CAPTAIN. It still stands, though the city itself is in flames. Are we to train our guns on it?

TRENK. But of course. Remember! Always thorough!

CAPTAIN. They fly the Red Cross flag from it.

TRENK. That gives a good mark, eh?

[Laughter.]

CAPTAIN. These then are my instructions?

TRENK. There was no need to ask them, and, besides, did they not foil us before Paris? Well then, we take what revenge comes to hand.

[He drinks.]

The Red Cross Flag? What is that to us more than a treaty? The one a rag of cotton, the other a scrap of paper. The laws of war?

[Striking his fist on the table.]

Herrgottsakrament! We make them as we march!

[Exit CAPTAIN.]

Now bring in this fellow that you have caught.

[A sign is made to those outside, while

TRENK fills a fresh glass of champagne. Enter UHLAN OFFICER and two UHLANS, bringing in a young Frenchman.

TRENK. Let him stand there, where he can see me. *[Curls moustache.*

OFFICER. Sir, we caught this fellow lurking outside the walls after no good. He will tell us nothing, so we have brought him here where he will be made to speak.

TRENK. Now, fellow, does the main French force intend retreat, or no? You can tell us.

PRISONER. I will not.

OFFICER. *[Striking PRISONER on cheek.]* Salute the General.

PRISONER. I will only salute a French officer.

[OFFICER again slaps him on the face. The

PRISONER quivers with rage, but is silent.

TRENK. What of another force to the westward?
Where are they?

PRISONER. I cannot tell, sir.

TRENK. [*Sipping wine and curling moustache.*]
Now understand, you dog, we are here to bring you
our Kultur. If you will not take it with a spoon,
you must take it from the shell. It must be battered
into you. You understand that? What?

PRISONER. I understand, sir.

TRENK. Is this retreat of the French meant or
not? Answer! or you'll be shot as a spy.

PRISONER. I am no spy, sir.

TRENK. [*Banging fist on the table.*] I say you are
a spy—therefore you are one! Are you married?

PRISONER. Not yet, sir, but I hope to be shortly.

TRENK. Well then, you can leave at once, a free
man, if you will tell me what I want to know.
Think of—her!

PRISONER. I will not speak.

TRENK. Not even to go back to her? Eh?

PRISONER. No!

TRENK. So!—I give you two minutes to decide.

And then——

[TRENK takes out watch, finishes glass;
another bottle is uncorked; there is a
burst of flame at the back from below.

PRISONER. I am ready, sir. I will die.

TRENK. Ass! Take him away!

[They bandage his eyes and are taking him
off, when two SOLDIERS enter hurriedly,
dragging a GIRL between them.

SOLDIER. [*Saluting.*] Sir, here is this fellow's sweetheart. We found her asking for news of him.

TRENK. Ah, but this is better. Put the fellow back, and the girl there opposite. Unbandage his eyes and let him see her. Now we shall have it!

GIRL. [*Starting forward.*] Pierre!

TRENK. Good! Now we shall see. Now, Mam'selle, is this your sweetheart?

GIRL. [*Hesitating.*] Yes, sir.

TRENK. And you are shortly to be married?

GIRL. We had hoped——

TRENK. Good so——

[*Chucking her under the chin.*]

Now, little one, 'tis for you to decide whether he lives, or whether—he's shot.

Your brave French Army, where would you say then they are now?—Look at him and tell us.

GIRL. Oh, if it is to save——

PRISONER. Marie, I forbid you to speak.

TRENK. Lie down, dog!

[*To GIRL.*] You have but to tell us this and go away together—to be married. If you refuse——

GIRL. Pierre, let me speak!

PRISONER. Are you French?

TRENK. [*To PRISONER.*] Once more, you then. Look well at your sweetheart. Is she not pretty, and, alas, she loves you. Now if you will not speak—tell us all—not only shall you be shot, but she——

PRISONER. What?

TRENK. I shall myself endeavour to take your place. I have conceived something of a fancy for your Marie; and in time of war—eh?

PRISONER. [*Springing towards TRENK.*] Sacré!

[*SOLDIERS seize him.*]

TRENK. [*Putting his arm round GIRL.*] Once more then?

PRISONER. No, for France!

TRENK. And you, my dolly?

GIRL. No, for Pierre!

TRENK. Take him off! But stay, he shall kiss her once.

[*To GIRL.*] Kiss him!

[*MARIE goes to PIERRE, whom she kisses.*]

Was that kiss sweet, eh? It need not be the last, if——

[*PIERRE remains silent and at a sign is taken off.*]

You see you could have saved him by speaking, but now——

GIRL. He told me to be dumb and I was dumb. Ah, do not part us even now; shoot me with him. If he is a spy, then so am I.

TRENK. Ah no, little one, I have something better for you. You there! [*Signing to ORDERLY.*] Conduct mam'selle to my room; but first she must drink a glass with me.

[He fills and hands her a glass. A shot rings out and she flings the glass in his face.]

Ah, now, my wild-cat, see how you have stained this uniform. Ah, but you must pay for this with a kiss.

[He starts forward to embrace her, but she, snatching his revolver from the table, shoots herself, falling in the arms of the ORDERLY.]

Herrgottsakrament! You should have stopped her.

ORDERLY. Sir, she was too quick.

TRENK. Take her away!

[He slowly empties glass; as he sets it down a Lieutenant enters.]

LIEUTENANT. Sir, the Abbé of the Cathedral asks you to spare him a moment.

TRENK. So, so.

[Enter ABBÉ, white-haired, followed by two priests.]

ABBÉ. Sir, you are the general in command here?

TRENK. I am.

ABBÉ. General, your guns are trained on our Cathedral. One shell has already fallen.

TRENK. Well?

ABBÉ. Sir, I have come to ask you to spare the ancient church.

TRENK. Old man, war is war.

ABBÉ. That I know well. I do not ask for the homes of our people, nor even for their lives. I see that would be vain; but I am here to plead for this church that holds such memories.

TRENK. [*Laughing.*] Ah! You lose your job, what?

ABBÉ. [*Advancing.*] Your business, sir, is war, but I would ask you

In the mid-track of ruin to spare these walls.

TRENK. Priest, you waste breath.

ABBÉ. A moment let me speak.

[TRENK *impatiently sits down, taking out his watch.*

TRENK. To the point. As war is war, so time is time.

ABBÉ. If Rheims Cathedral you must batter down,
You batter no mere mass of masonry:
You burn the body of an eternal soul.

[TRENK *sighs and looks at watch.*

They who did build so high they feared not time;
They feared not man, and now shall man erase
This thought unchanging in the drift of change;
This Prayer that ever-rising still abides;
This Rally of the Soul in days of dross,
With windows rose-flushed from heroic dawns;
A Vision frozen, stationary Sigh,
Time-worn, yet wearying t'ward Eternity.

TRENK. Less of Eternity and more of time.

ABBÉ. To you, a patriot, I appeal by names
Of Goethe, Schiller and of Beethoven!

TRENK. Bah! Dreamers all!

ABBÉ. Yet when your country stands
For final Judgment at the Eternal Bar,
To whom then will she look? To you, or these?

TRENK. But meanwhile, will these aid us now to
grasp World-Power?

ABBÉ. Those already World-Power wield.
Did not your Schiller sing our Joan of Arc,
Her who is in this cathedral crowned a king?

TRENK. And whom you afterwards burnt as a witch?

ABBÉ. Then if I cannot move you by these names,
Think still what this destruction means to us:
Here for seven hundred years looked down on us
A nation's dearest Angels and old Knights;
This shrine for ivy hath our antique hours;
Here hath the mother brought her first-born child
To lay him at God's feet; bereaved women
Have heard a whisper in the glooming nave.
Oh, can you shell a people's memory?
Put out a solemn taper of dark France,
Man, man, do you not fear?

TRENK. No living thing!

ABBÉ. Aye, but the dead?

TRENK. The dead? They are far off!

ABBÉ. No, but the nearer in that they are dead.
If we revenge not, yet will God avenge!

TRENK. No God we fear! And what revenge is yours?

ABBÉ. [*Pointing outside.*] Those ruined choirs
for ever unrestored,

Against you standing, age-long witnesses !

TRENK. And for this reason shall that minster
fall !

We come to strike a terror in mankind,
To make war frightful, not to life alone,
But to your souls; your memories to maim,
And hack your Holy places through and through.
The war we bring is not of blood alone,
No, but to desecrate all that is dear,
O'erride your hearts, make ashes of your Faith!
Is it your holy dead that you invoke?
These, I say, these we would appal and scare!
Old man, your speech has made you dry, come
drink !

[*Proffering a glass which the ABBÉ refuses.*]

ABBÉ. On Force you call; take heed lest Force
itself

Reel back on you—perhaps this very night!

[*Exit* ABBÉ and PRIESTS.]

TRENK [*who is now wine-flushed, addressing*
OFFICERS *around him.*] Now what you heard me
tell that fool outright,

Who came here whining for his bricks and mortar,
Remember each of you, as you are soldiers,
And as true children of the Fatherland:
Lay well my words to heart and act on them!
Your business is to make war terrible,
To strike alarm and anguish in the heart!
To batter a dreadful culture into man!
We come not hither but to slay and burn,
But to make havoc in the very souls
Of those whom we subdue. We come to grasp
The world and nothing less; not Belgium,
Not France, not England, though she stops us most,
Until we wrest from her the very waves;
But these are not our goal, our final port,
Though first through these must we hack our way:

World-Power is our furious journey's end;
Therefore all Pity, Scruple, Truth discard;
There is no truth but one: that we alone
Are destined for the Lordship of the Earth!
Then come like wolves upon the villages,
And visit wasted cities at sunset,
Like the lean lion roaming Babylon!
Be deaf then to the wail of women, blind
To children's blood; the cause demands of you
That you shall lie and burn, betray and snare!
Remember Attila, grand ruthless Hun!
Whom did he spare? What father or what wife?
Dead-straight his track of fury through the Earth;
Make him example, imitate that rage!
And for the people, be they at your mercy:
Lop from the wrist the hand that may offend
And leave them nothing but their eyes to weep with,
While hovers over them our boding bird,
Advising from the clouds our dubious guns!
Make women a war-screen, the babe a shield

To interpose between you and the foe!

Be the Red Flag the red rag to the bull!

Let nothing live between you and your goal!

[He sits and all sit round the table drinking, and sing "Deutschland, Deutschland ueber Alles." When the song has ended, TRENK, raising his glass, cries: "To the Day!" They all raise their glasses with cries of "To the Day!" As they sit in act of drinking a turpinite shell bursts outside with a thudding sound. The stage is filled with fumes, which, as they disappear, disclose the whole party, each man rigid, as he was sitting in life, but motionless and dead.]

SCENE II

AN ENGLISH ORCHARD

SCENE II.—*An English Orchard. Sunset. Enter the widowed LADY CARTERET and ETHEL MILLARD. The widow leans on the arm of the girl as they slowly pass towards a garden-seat beneath an apple tree. Here they sit.*

LADY CARTERET. How the days linger on, and still
no news

Of him, my boy!

ETHEL. Of him, who is my love.

LADY CARTERET. Yes, yes, too often, Ethel, I
forget

In my deep yearning for the son I love,
That for a lover you are trembling too.

ETHEL. And on one life two women's hearts are
fixed.

LADY CARTERET. At times, I think, perhaps too
much of self

Is in the thought; that ours the harder task is;
The task of women in war-time to wait.

ETHEL. And we would do so much, yet we must
wait.

O, how one envies now that Maid of France,
Who, riding all in steel, led armies on.
After such glory did she feel the flame!

LADY CARTERET. But then she had no child.

ETHEL. Nor any lover.

LADY CARTERET. O, who would grudge the
triumph of brave men?

ETHEL. How glorious the onward rush, the cheer!

LADY CARTERET. Splendid to stand against the
leaden hail!

ETHEL. Or in the mowed war-line to give no inch.

LADY CARTERET. How fine to grapple in the very
heaven!

ETHEL. Or go back for a friend through gaping
death!

LADY CARTERET. And yet, and yet—to wait is harder still.

There one forgets, the blood leaps in the vein!

They charge—retreat; they charge—or headlong fall.

What time in all the roaring for a thought?

Death beckons, yet with what a royal hand!

The fury and the peril, that is theirs;

The stillness and the safety, that is ours.

Yet He, who reads the hearts, knows which is worse.

ETHEL. The dull expectancy that finds no vent.

LADY CARTERET. The dread by night, the stifle through the day.

ETHEL. The uncertainty that's worse than any truth!

LADY CARTERET. To go about the house, as though at ease.

ETHEL. The deep alarm, not outwardly betrayed.

LADY CARTERET. She is a hero too who checks the
tear !

ETHEL. Her victory is dumb, but victory still !

LADY CARTERET. Yet, how serene ' the October
evening shines !

How well these apples ripen to the fall ;

Leisurely flushing perfect.

ETHEL. And yet, some, see,

Strown by the gale o'ernight, fallen untimely !

*[Enter CHARLES ROWLANDS, who slowly
approaches the garden-seat, bare-
headed.]*

ROWLANDS. Ladies, I bring you news, which I
know you will bear with the courage which is asked
from all of us in such a time as this. I thought you
would rather hear it from me than see it by chance.
I was your boy's tutor and afterwards his greatest
friend.

LADY CARTERET. Is he wounded ?

ROWLANDS. He was wounded, Lady Carteret——

LADY CARTERET. You mean——

ROWLANDS. That he has met with a splendid death; that he is to be envied by all of us who are compelled to stay behind. As soon as I hear more I will come and tell you. There can be nothing but what is glorious. I will not intrude on you any longer. Please send for me if you care to, I will come at once.

LADY CARTERET. Thank you.

[*Exit ROWLANDS. ETHEL is shaking with sobs which she in vain tries to suppress.*

LADY CARTERET *remains dry-eyed.*

LADY CARTERET. Let the tears come, child, they will bring relief;

To me they will not come.

ETHEL. Ah, but forgive me.

I should be helping you to bear and not

Myself give way; and yet the future dashed

Suddenly from me! Though I trembled, still
From day to day, at least I never knew;
Each dawn brought in for me a deeper dawn;
Each sunrise was a lighting of my life.
Soft fires would hover round me in the air.
The year waned, but the spring was in my soul;
I could not see the burning of my leaves.
I stood tip-toe upon youth's primrose-bank;
I blew warm kisses o'er the sea of time.
The very fear, the fierce uncertainty,
Heaven help me! gave an edge to happiness!
Now all the colour has gone out of the world,
And now there is no reason in existence—
The Why is out of life and all is flat.

LADY CARTERET. You, you, a child that hath but
played about,
And lost a favourite toy, to whom the Earth
Is still a nursery, what should you know
Of grief that is too deep for those slight tears?
Your sorrow is the future, mine the past;

You can but fret, while I forever pine.
You—did you lie in pangs to bring him forth?
I knew the boy ere he was in the flesh,
Even then we were companions through long nights.
He was a thought, a hope—and now a dream.
To you he was but as a summer dawn;
What is your dawn beside my red sunset?
O, I have laboured on that growing soul
As patient as a sculptor on his marble;
And for that holy childhood I made light
Of all the distance between me and God.
His young flaws and his frailties would strike fear
Deep into me; how wistfully I watched him,
Turning his lightest word this way and that!
His father dead my love was not divided,
But full on him and sheer it spent itself.
You—have you prayed for him, or if you prayed
Was there no difference in your prayer and mine?
The sigh of a girl, and a woman's agony!
Child, when a wave long-gathered, and so vast,

Bursts on the rock, with what a moan at last
On melancholy shingles it recedes!

[ETHEL *buries her face in her hands.*

Ah, but forgive me; we are both so struck;
Both women, and perhaps you understand,
As women can at times, not having felt;
Strangely our knowledge comes, our sympathy,
And we are touched by that we never touched.
Give me your arm; we'll go into the house
And lose a little in the general grief
Our sharp, particular pain, help and console—
How many must there be, wretched as we are,
Mothers and wives and daughters through the land;
One in a palace hurt, one in a cot.
You are my daughter now!

ETHEL. Lean on me, mother!

[*They go into the house.*

SCENE III

OFFICE OF PRESS BUREAU,
BERLIN

SCENE III.—*The office of the German Press Bureau in Berlin.* HERR WEISS seated at a table centre, surrounded by papers, writing; various reporters seated at desk round him, writing rapidly.

WEISS. [*Banging fist on table and looking at watch.*] Now then. Time! You there—the report on the situation in London and the attitude of the Parliament and the people at the present moment, to be circulated this evening through the length and breadth of the Fatherland. The report on London—is it ready?

[*Again looks at watch.*]

REPORTER. [*Rising.*] It is ready, Herr Weiss.

WEISS. Read!

REPORTER. “The panic in London, which broke

out on the declaration of war with Germany shows no sign of abatement."

WEISS. Good so! Now—details!

REPORTER. "Business has been for some time at a standstill. Even street-traffic is practically suspended, and in such congested thoroughfares as the Strand, for instance, one meets only a few foolhardy clerks, who in sheer dread of starvation hurry citywards in fear and trembling. Actors out of work, and other desperate characters, hang about the street-corners, demanding food or money either with whining voices or blackmailing threats. At night London presents an incredible spectacle. It has, in fact, all the aspect of a closely-invested city.

WEISS. [*Banging fist on table.*] Ah! And so it is!

REPORTER. "Not a sound is to be heard but from time to time the sullen and terrifying drone of our aeroplanes, or still more awful spectacle of a Zeppelin, too high up to be scrutinized. Occasionally you may see the white faces of scared tradesmen

start up for a moment from various cellars, where the majority of Londoners now spend the long nights in a fever of apprehension."

WEISS. Good! the general description—and no exaggeration. Now the scenes in Parliament and round the Royal Palace.

REPORTER. "In Parliament the general dismay is especially apparent. In the chamber, lighted only by candles for fear of attracting our airships, the members stealthily assemble. There have, however, been violent scenes. On Tuesday night the Leader of the Opposition engaged in personal conflict with the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and only released his grip of the latter's throat by the threat of the Chancellor to find no more money for the war. This had the effect for the moment of allaying party-differences and uniting the government and opposition. The Chancellor has removed in a noiseless motor-car, with blinds down, to the Exchequer, suffering from shock. The Palace of Buckingham——"

WEISS. Buckingham Palace.

REPORTER. Your pardon, Herr Direktor.

[He takes pen and alters.]

"Buckingham Palace is surrounded by troops, who amount practically in numbers to an army, and the expeditionary force has been seriously depleted owing to the necessity of defending the person of the King from the fury of his deceived subjects. The cries and curses of the mob are said to resemble nothing so much as the howling of wolves. It is said that the Royal Family has been removed secretly by night in a large warehouse-van to the shooting-box at Sandringham; but of this there is as yet no confirmation. The condition of abject alarm in the Metropolis obtains in the other cities of England, the inhabitants of which practically live underground."

WEISS. I pass that—off with it at once!

[Exit REPORTER.]

Now Paris! The attitude of the people to the government.

REPORTER. "Paris is seething with insurrection and mutiny. No less than eight governments have been formed and dissolved since the outbreak of the war. The attitude of the Parisians towards the authorities recalls the worst days of the Revolution. Everywhere are heard the cries of 'A bas la guerre!' 'A bas Poincaré!' Officers are continually executed secretly for refusing to go to the front. Officers will not lead, soldiers will not obey. The fall of the city is hourly expected; its only defences are barriers of dead Frenchmen piled six and eight feet high."

WEISS. The last statement—just a little too much perhaps.

REPORTER. [*Crosses out statement.*] "Piled three feet high."

WEISS. Better!

REPORTER. "The citizens are eagerly anticipating the entry of our troops as the only salvation."

WEISS. Well! That will do. Let that go out at once.

[*Exit* REPORTER.

WEISS. Now you! The situation at Petrograd!

[*Enter* OFFICER *carrying papers.*

OFFICER. Herr Weiss?

[WEISS *rises and bows.*

OFFICER. You are director of this Press Bureau, instituted by the Government?

WEISS. I have that honour.

OFFICER. I am sent from the Imperial Palace,

[WEISS *bows low.*

to ask you to account for a sentence in this report, circulated in America. You are aware of the importance of the good-will of America?

WEISS. But of course!

OFFICER. Then read that.

WEISS. [*Reading.*] "The reports of recent victo-

ries in the East are now being received with caution in Berlin."

[*Excitedly.*] Now who—which of you is responsible for this?

OFFICER. Wait! That can be settled after. Do you realize the nature of your offence?

WEISS. Ah! A mistake!

OFFICER. Germany makes no mistakes; or if she does, she does not admit them. But do you realize what you have——

WEISS. I scarcely comprehend.

OFFICER. Herr Weiss, you have published THE TRUTH!

WEISS. Ah, no, no!

OFFICER. THE TRUTH! It is stated here. Now I have to tell you from my Imperial Master, that you are hereby dismissed from your office.

WEISS. Ah, do not say that!

OFFICER. My Imperial Master wishes to point out to you, that you were placed in a position of national

trust. Your business was fiction—for the good of the Fatherland—not fact. Your high office demanded of you unceasing vigilance in the avoidance of truth; a ceaseless energy in fabrication. You have been found wanting, you go!

WEISS. But it was not *my* oversight. It was a lapse of a subordinate—the lapse into truth!

OFFICER. For which you are responsible.

WEISS. [*Falling on his knees.*] Ah, Captain! Plead for me to the Emperor! Say—say—that I have served him well, with zeal, with industry, since the outbreak of the war. Ah, think yourself! If some slight negligence of military duty had been charged against you—

OFFICER. I should expect what I should get.

WEISS. But place before your august Master my long, honourable career of ceaseless lies. I plead my stainless record of fabrication. Must this all be destroyed by a momentary lapse into truth, com-

mitted too by a subordinate, whom I trusted, alas, too well?

[He weeps.]

Pray him to give me another chance. There is against me no previous conviction of veracity. I defy all of you here to charge me with telling the truth on any single occasion.

CHORUS OF REPORTERS. We acquit you of that charge, Herr Direktor.

WEISS. You hear? They know; they who are in personal, hourly contact with me, by day, by night, that I am no truthmonger. That but in this instance I have never for one moment relaxed my ardour for the false, my pure passion for misstatement. Must all this be blotted out for one—what shall I say—peccadillo of accuracy? I will strive, so tell the Emperor, I will strive never to give way again, only give me one more chance to redeem myself and wipe out this blot!

OFFICER. I have no more to say!

WEISS. Then plead to him not only on my behalf but on the behalf of others. I have a wife, and a son with a career before him. Must they too suffer? They depend on my capacity for falsehood, they are, I tell you, dependent on my reputation for lies.

OFFICER. I have given my instructions and I go.

[*Exit* OFFICER.]

WEISS. Ah! All is lost! This is the supreme cruelty, that the labour of a life can be sacrificed to the mistake of a moment. Ah, my wife, who had such trust in me! My Fritz, who was following so faithfully in my footsteps. And also my iron-cross—lost, lost, lost!

[*He falls on the floor while the REPORTERS gather sympathetically round him as the curtain falls.*]

SCENE IV

COLOGNE

SCENE IV.—*Cologne. The chief room in the house of the burgomaster of Cologne. ELSA, his daughter, and CLOTHILDE, a Belgian girl, are sitting either side of the table, on which a single candle between them is guttering down. The time is midnight. Both girls have an air of suppressed anxiety.*

ELSA. Listen! What sound is that?

CLOTHILDE. I can hear nothing.

[Enter suddenly a German OFFICER. Both girls start up in terror.]

OFFICER. Ladies, I have only a moment. I warn you that the enemy-advance-guard, French, Belgian and English, may be here at any moment. This house will probably be entered first.

[Exit OFFICER.]

CLOTHILDE. Elsa !

ELSA. Sh-sh !—No, it is nothing.

CLOTHILDE. Elsa, what a friend you have been to me, to me, a Belgian girl, and you a German. When your army, retreating fast, dragged me here along with them across the frontier, starving, half-dead, you alone had pity on me, hid me away and saved me.

ELSA. We are both women.

CLOTHILDE. Yes, and that is why I tremble now for you.

ELSA. For me?

CLOTHILDE. Yes; as *they* treated me, these in their turn will treat you.

ELSA. What do you mean, Clothilde?

CLOTHILDE. [*Taking ELSA's hand in her own.*] I have not told you all, though something; and now, when any moment they may come, I must speak as one woman to another.

ELSA. Yes, quickly then, what is it?

CLOTHILDE. It is horrible! It was with us then as it will now be with you. When the invaders entered our town they laid it waste and they shot us down. Their captain quartered himself in my father's house. One night they were all drunk; this captain then seized me and attempted—

ELSA. Ah, I understand.

CLOTHILDE. [*Hiding her face on Elsa's bosom.*] And afterwards it had to be.

ELSA. What? That?

CLOTHILDE. Yes, that; so that you took to your heart a girl of the people of your foes, who is more even than she appeared a victim. Now, do you see? Do you not fear for yourself? "War," he said, "is war."

ELSA. And we are part of the toll.

[*The candle goes out and the sound of military music is heard approaching.*]

CLOTHILDE. They are here! Let me stand by you!

ELSA. No. I'll receive them alone. Clothilde, if

they should attempt on me what you say, I would find some means to escape it; if it were by death.

[The sound of marching feet is heard approaching.]

CLOTHILDE. What then of your father upstairs, who is almost at death's door? And this city, which you love so—if it rested with you alone to save them?

ELSA. *[Wildly.]* Oh, then. Oh, I cannot tell!—They are coming; leave me.

[Exit CLOTHILDE. In the darkness the English general MURDOCH enters quietly with other officers.]

MURDOCH. No light here! *[Sees ELSA standing by the table.]* A woman! *[To ELSA.]* Bring us some light! *[She goes out.]* Well, gentlemen, we have battered down the forts and we are first into the city, but I hardly think our French and Belgian

friends will be long behind us. Meanwhile, this is hardly a cheerful reception.

[*Re-enter ELSA with two candles which she sets on the table.*]

MURDOCH. And you, who are you? You are too dainty to be——

ELSA. I, Sir, am the daughter of the house. My father, the burgomaster, is old and at this moment ill. I am here to do my best.

MURDOCH. [*To officers.*] And a very charming hostess.

ELSA. General, you are English?

MURDOCH. I am.

ELSA. May I make one request of you?

MURDOCH. You may, but I cannot promise to grant it.

ELSA. It is that I may speak to you for one moment alone.

MURDOCH. Oh, very well. Gentlemen, will you retire?
[*Exeunt officers.*]

ELSA. Sir, I want to plead with you for our city. For me—I have no mother left and for years this city has had for me the soul of a mother.

MURDOCH. I quite understand. But this decision does not rest with me alone; it depends on my comrades, the French and Belgian commanders, and they have bitter memories to avenge.

ELSA. The Belgians, yes; but, sir, will you at least do your utmost to save our ancient church?

MURDOCH. [*Taking candle and looking at her.*] Child, you are very beautiful.

ELSA. Oh? So they tell me.

MURDOCH. That contrast in colour in hair and eyes is not common, at least in my country.

ELSA. No? I am glad that I please you so far, and I will do my utmost to be your hostess. I will spare no pains, no labour. There is nothing you can ask of me that I will not do.

MURDOCH. [*Approaching her more closely.*] Nothing?

ELSA. Nothing you may ask.

MURDOCH. [*Touching her hand.*] Even—

ELSA. [*Recoiling.*] But spare the city.

MURDOCH. [*Recoiling also.*] Oh, but this is a bargain! God help me! What am I doing? I should be no better than they! The cause is too great; this is the devil's lure. Child, I give you my promise to do my utmost for your city, but not on conditions, believe me, not on terms!

[*The Marseillaise is heard without; enter*

OFFICER.

OFFICER. The French, sir, and the Belgians. I thought they would not be far behind us.

MURDOCH. Yes, they are too eager. [*To ELSA.*] Well, then, I will do my best for you, and you will do your best—for us.

[*Enter the French General LARRIER and the Belgian General LEBLANC.*

LARRIER. Ah, my dear comrade, we are not, I think, far behind you.

[The three Generals greet one another.]

MURDOCH. No indeed.

LARRIER. At last then we are in the German city. How good it is to tread this ground under foot! Ah, but we have waited, how long! And the hour is come; the dream is realized! Here begins the Revenge!

[He kisses his sword-hilt.]

LEBLANC. And for us too. Our debt is the briefer, but the bitterer.

MURDOCH. Well, sir, is it decided what we do now?

LARRIER. For the moment I have no fresh instructions; but surely there can be little doubt.

MURDOCH. Of what? How do you direct us?

LARRIER. Gentlemen, I do not presume to direct, but——

MURDOCH. What then?

LARRIER. Can one ask? As I entered these walls, I glanced up at that cathedral, and I said to myself: "Cologne for Rheims!"

LEBLANC. Or Louvain, or Malines! Let this city taste now of that cup which we have drained to the dregs.

LARRIER. And from here onward, onward to Berlin!

MURDOCH. Gentlemen, I understand well enough how hard it must be for you to restrain a fury so provoked and so long pent up, but—is it wise?

LARRIER. Put it this way, sir: If you yourself had for many years been first well-nigh ruined, then continually sneered at and spat on by some personal enemy—well then—at last you have him by the throat, who had done all this to you; do you now relax your grip of him and say to yourself: "Ah, is it wise?"

LEBLANC. And for us, you may say our memories

are not so long, but think of what kind those memories are!

MURDOCH. And still I do not like it, gentlemen.

LARRIER. But we, need I say, cannot move without you, sir. Once let some whisper of discord arise, and who shall say where it will end?

MURDOCH. Gentlemen, you do not quite understand my position. I see—Oh, of course not so strongly as you see—how shall I explain it?—some altogether larger issue at stake behind this very natural emotion. This makes me hesitate.

LARRIER. [*With restrained emotion.*] Remember,
sir, that France for forty years,
France from her highest to her humblest son,
With all her women, mother, wife and child,
All France from head to heel, from top to toe,
Not every soldier: every citizen,
Poet, mechanic, merchant, labourer, priest;
That many now who toiled for it are dead,
But left to us their industry of wrath.

We have been stung beyond all softer salve,
Struck, but were helpless to give back the blow,
Jeered at, but never might resent a jeer.
At last the hour for which we yearned and ached!
At last the spring for which we coiled and crouched!
At last the cup for which our lips are parched!
Now can you dash it from us? Oh, 'tis vain!
This passion cannot sleep till it is purged.
France through this war has fought a sullen fight;
Burrowing to victory on through warrens of war.
Ah, but 'tis not her way; her splendid habit
Is in the rush, the onset and assault;
Here she has bided in a dreadful patience,
In still tenacity her trenches held;
If she withdrew, she wrathfully withdrew,
And a strange silence and a quiet kept,
Putting an alien disposition on;
But in retreat, in silence was a fury,
Deliberate rage, with eyes upon the hour;
Now who shall stay her? Who shall stay a nation?

All the accumulated avalanche?

France makes no politician's counterstroke,

No military white-wash of her lilies.

This vengeance is the vengeance of a people!

LEBLANC. He speaks for France, now I for Belgium,

And with a sterner, fiercer emphasis.

Sir, she is not—she was not, rather say—

A country that provokes the rage of war,

Of irritant ambition or swelling dream;

A pastoral folk, content on its own plains,

With towns in peaceful buzz of industry,

Pictures unmatched, churches unparalleled

She had, her halls were symphonies of stone;

A young king ruled her, worthy of her love.

Sudden the thunder of a trampling host

Burst on her; yet might she have stood aside,

Letting the war-lord's legions thunder through.

Secure she might have stood, damnably safe;

She chose. Right in his path she flung herself,

Unsure of succour, splendidly alone!
A pigmy stayed the intolerable swarm
Till giants could collect their tardy might.
We gave you breathing-space—at what a price!
Our towns are ashes, and our pastures rot;
Our halls and our cathedrals, thundered down,
Lie strown like lilies after hailing rage.
It is a land haunted, not habited;
Our Belgium is dead, unless one say,
That so afflicted heart is beating still.
We three have seen—it is our lot to see—
The laid-out body of some friend we loved,
Yet from that sight a comfort we could draw,
So still the brow, so utterly at peace.
But on this corse—this country now a corse—
What signs of rage! What slurs of violence!
Ere she gave up the ghost, how was she marred!
I stand for Belgium; she asks vengeance here,
And not here only, but where'er we pass;
With such a cry as may not be denied

For troops of young men, slaughtered in their
strength,

For the old man shot down at his own door.

The girl polluted and the woman raped,

For children that implore us without hands,

And figures like disfeatured statues left.

She asks it in the name of ruined beauty,

And rolling curse of the remembering dead!

MURDOCH. And still I do not like it, gentlemen.

Ah, do not think that I too cannot feel;

It needs not to be Belgian or French

To have a horror on one's very flesh

At that which has been done. But as you speak

For France, and he for Belgium, so I

Will state the case for England as I see it:

She feels, I take it, that she stands at war,

Not for a frontier-line in a dim land,

No, nor to punish some rebellious tribe,

That troubles her reared Empire momentarily,

Yet for a frontier that itself is Freedom;

A grapple of the Earth, this way or that;
I am no saint, but this I will say out:
We are in arms for nothing but a cause.
Therefore could England bring into the field
The hardy brood of her sea-parted sons,
Each man an athlete, clean of limb and life,
Youth of the open-air, and stung with sun.
Hence the still vigil of the Northern sea,
But—look to this—not those alone she brings;
But dreaming India hither has she drawn,
Her princes prodigal of pearl and gold.
Why?—Not for France and not for Belgium,
Not even for England, but a deeper Faith;
Darkly they grapple to their souls this cause,
Dimly they know that this, our cause, is just.
Of such a heritage then, gentlemen,
We three, I take it, are advanced trustees.
Then let the tower of that cathedral fall,
And with it comes to ground a towering Thought!
This issue is too large for your revenge;

Which of us would betray his country? Here
Let us beware lest we betray the world.

LARRIER. Sir, I admit the largeness of the issue.
But England can more calmly measure it;
The salt wave gives her leisure for ideas.
Your land is not a waste, your churches stand,
And still the business of an island hums.
All day the spidery tradesman waits the fly,
Then with his family to the cellar hies;
And still at football stands the crowd agape,
And the nice patriot patrols the street;
Thus the wide view more easily you take.

LEBLANC. And you—you—if to you it had been
told,
How your own boy was butchered in his brightness,
That stood between his sister and her shame;
Or if, returning, you had seen, as I,
Your young wife haggard gone, and muttering,
Insane through very seeing of her eyes;
If this came home to you, home to your heart,

How would you answer then—as you stand there?

MURDOCH. God help me, gentlemen, you drive me hard!

Then I would answer as I answer now.

[*Enter an OFFICER with despatches.*

OFFICER. The English general, General Murdoch?

MURDOCH. I am he.

OFFICER. I am from head-quarters.

[*Presents papers.*

MURDOCH. [*Hastily perusing papers.*] Well, this is all good—yes I see. This is clear enough.

You will report that I understand my instructions, perfectly. Well? Is there anything amiss that I should know?

OFFICER. General, I am charged—I wish I were not—with a personal message to you, so perhaps these gentlemen—

MURDOCH. O no, there can be nothing personal to me that they may not hear.

OFFICER. General, your son—

MURDOCH. Wounded?

OFFICER. Yes, General.

MURDOCH. Well, we must all risk that. But badly?

OFFICER. Mortally, sir.

MURDOCH. Dead?

OFFICER. Yes, Sir. We found him in the German trenches, against which he had headed a charge, somewhat rashly.

MURDOCH. Then Harry is dead? A moment, gentlemen, and we will resume. You will understand that the boy was more to me than just a son. We had grown to be friends; we read, we shot and fished together.—Now I am at your service.

[*To OFFICER.*] It was kind of you to bring me this news straight; thank you. [*OFFICER still stands.*] Is there anything more?

OFFICER. There is something more, General.

MURDOCH. What can be worse than death?

OFFICER. When we found the body it had been mutilated.

[OFFICER *retires overcome with emotion.*

MURDOCH. [*Staggering back.*] The fiends, the fiends!

LARRIER. Now by your son?

LEBLANC. The body of your son!

MURDOCH. [*Wildly.*] Now lay Cologne in ashes!

[*Recovering himself.*

Pardon me, a decision must not be made under such stress. I cannot trust myself. Give me an hour, one hour of silence and solitude, and I will finally say yes or no.

LARRIER. But of course; and accept our deepest sympathies.

[*Exit* MURDOCH.

LEBLANC. [*To* LARRIER.] An hour then.

[*Exit. LARRIER is left alone. A bugle call is heard outside. LARRIER then throws cloak round him and sinks on a couch;*

he sleeps. There is a pause; then the glittering vision of the spirit of Joan of Arc in armour appears at back. For a moment she watches the sleeping soldier.

LARRIER. [*Slowly rising, awaking.*] What fragrance stealing in upon my sleep
Disturbs me? Is an angel in the house?

[He rises dreamily, perceiving the armed figure falls on one knee.

What art thou, like some holy picture seen
In childhood long ago?—I know thee not,
Yet is thy face and form familiar.
Art thou a spirit come to me all-bright?
Thou art in arms, and yet a maiden seemest.
I dread thy strangeness yet I fear thee not.

SPIRIT OF JOAN. O wearied son of France! That
waking fragrance
So sweet thine eyes did open, came to thee
From roses in the rain of paradise,

A far-off home. Though there we are in bliss,
And quite uplifted above any tear,
At times Earth touches us, however far,
And brings a ruffle on the sea of glass.
I see France suffer, though I may not weep.
Know'st thou me not? Soldier, look on me well;
I am that Joan that died in fire for France.
See on this arm the brand of Rouen-flame;
Behold the signs of burning and believe!

LARRIER. Oh, armed maid, at last I know thee
well.

SPIRIT OF JOAN OF ARC. I feel with pain the sharp
contact with Earth,
Where so I suffered, and I would be brief.
Yet of my coming is the need so deep,
That I endure a while the mortal touch.
I come to say to thee: "Forego Revenge!"

[LARRIER *starts.*

Looked for so long, so easy now to take.
Let not my land in victory lose her soul!

How barren is revenge! What doth she show,
When to Her dismal harvest She is come?
She sows the wilderness and reaps the waste.
She hath in Her no quality of dew.
Who hath more motive for revenge than I,
After the ruin of beloved Rheims,
Where singing boys did warble, pure as birds,
Where in this armour I did crown a king?
And yet I come to tell thee: "Spare Cologne!"

LARRIER. Yet they, who so have wasted us and
burned,

Shall we not call them to some dire account?

SPIRIT OF JOAN. Listen! The Powers of Darkness
loosed this war;

These hurl cathedrals down, women profane.

Fear then, lest these shall tempt you to repay

Till you at last they overwhelm in their own darkness.

Nations at times, as men, may nobler stand,

And finer in refusal than in act.

Have I not seen the very stars in Heaven

Flash all together at some splendid "No"?
And what is all the injury they have wrought?
What flame of body, or what woman's cry,
To the injury they do to their own souls?
Because they ruined Rheims, spare ye Cologne!
I can no more endure the touch of Earth;
And the cold strangeness of familiar things;
I grow half mortal in the mortal dawn.

[She begins to fade.]

Go onward, onward, but forget revenge,
For so forgetting you remember me!

[She fades.]

LARRIER. *[Rising and kissing the hilt of his sword.]* And so forgetting, so will I remember.
If this be dream, then it is well to dream.
The fury under which I hastened here
Is out of me. Thee, maiden, I obey.
For if I fight for thee, I fight for France.
Then stand secure Cologne! I harm thee not!

[The cathedral clock chimes one.]

EPILOGUE

IN HELL

IN HELL.—*Scene as in PROLOGUE. As curtain rises
shadowy arms are uplifted in triumph.*

VOICES OF SHADOWS. All hail, O Satan, hail!

ATTILA. [*At foot of throne.*] All hail, O Satan!
Is my task well done?

SATAN. Servant, well done. I greet thee, Attila!
So thick the bloody myriads of the dead
Swarm hither, that I cease to welcome each
Thronging newcomer, only from the throne
I make an all-including, grave incline.
Here Earth revenges the defeat in Heaven!
Force triumphs, Hell hath victory at last!

ATTILA. Master, I have made desolate the Earth
And half the world have left a wilderness.
Beauty have I thrown down; Rapine and Rape
Stalk unimpeded through the ruined land.
And yet—

SATAN. What troubles thee, my servant, say?

ATTILA. I am aware in mid-rage and mid-havoc
Of some strange influence, I know not what;
A Power that is not Force—stronger than Force—
And soft as summer overcoming me.
No face, no form I see, unless at times
The flitting vision of an armed maid;
I feel this presence, understand it not,
But darkly, as a creature, am conscious of it.
What Lord can so subdue the Lord of Huns?
I met not Him when first I scourged the Earth.

SATAN. [*Rising.*] This Power will I for evermore
deny;

Hence to the Earth, more havoc waits thee there!

ATTILA. [*Preparing to depart.*] Master, I go—and
yet I go perplexed.

SATAN. If this be truth we lose our very being.

[*A soft beam falls on him from above.*

What beam is this that searches us at last,
And troubles Hell? Soft—yet it more afflicts me,

Than the fierce lightning that did scar my face,
When I with all my angels fell from Heaven.
I may not quail; but I begin to suffer
In this beginning of some final light,
In which I fear at last to be absorbed.
Now all my being is in deep travail,
Under a dreadful fall of gentleness,
A flower-soft Influence omnipotent.—
Is this our quiet end? Is this the pain
Of dissolution, or some pang of birth?
Awake ye, legions! Tremble, and awake!
I call on you to rise and to resist
This gentle doom, descending on us soft.
Arm, arm ye for a conflict worse than war!
My Power, my Power, why art thou leaving me?

[*He spreads out his arms as in crucifixion
as the curtain descends.*]

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